

## World's largest special forces training centre unveiled in Jordan

■ BY SHARON HOBSON

### Key Points

- New special forces training facility aims to bolster Jordan, US and allied forces' counter-terrorism and internal security skills
- The MOU site supports four simultaneous training operations and live ammunition training in certain zones

**Jordan's flagship King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Centre (KASOTC) was officially opened in May 2009, after nearly a decade's planning and construction as a joint initiative with the United States.**

Located 20 km northeast of Amman, KASOTC is the world's largest special forces training facility of its kind, specialising in counter-terrorism and internal security missions.



■ Aerial view of the KASOTC MOU zone. (David Oliver)

The training compound is situated in a remote 500-acre (202 ha) site alongside towering cliffs in Yajooz and comprises: a large, live-fire urban training centre; aircraft breaching site; vehicle training range; close-quarter battle houses; sniper training ranges; vehicle mockups; housing and mess hall facilities that can accommodate 650 people at a time.

As well as the two countries behind the

facility, other regional allies are expected to train there. Buildings represent a full range of urban, commercial and village types.

In certain zones alongside the cliffs, forces will be able to train using live ammunition while a long, live-fire driving track weaves between urban building facades to provide close-protection training for convoys.

Jordan previously attempted to build the USD99 million facility in 2002, but funds ran out until they were bolstered by US Department of Defence in 2005.

Several organisations are involved, but it is managed by the King Abdullah II Design and Development Bureau (KADDB), while the US Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) serves as the programme manager for the US government, working with KADDB to develop the criteria for the training facilities. The US Army Corps of Engineers, which is the project's contracting agency, subcontracted the design and development of the training centre to Stanley Consultants.

MOU (military operations in urban terrain) range instrumentation was set up by General Dynamics Information Technology under a 2006 Foreign Military Sales (FMS) contract from the US Army Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI). The MOU site supports four simultaneous training operations across 56 buildings and a mock up of an Airbus A300-series commercial airliner.

A centralised and integrated Range Operations Centre will support four simultaneous training operations, and monitor and

control all audio, video, special effects and target technology. Networked day/night and thermal-imaging cameras offer 360 degree coverage to capture exercises for After Action Review (AAR), while sound-effect speakers project hundreds of realistic sounds, including shouts, animal noises and gunfire, via a fibre-optic local area network (LAN).

The training area has a variety of target sets including 166 Stationary Infantry Targets (SIT) and 50 Human Urban Targets (HUT) on swing mounts. Battlefield special effects - such as rooftop explosions with debris, concussion wave cannon, automatic weapons simulator, simulated smells, fog generator and improvised explosive device (IED) kit - will be used for Special Operation Forces training.



■ KASOTC'S A300-series aircraft breaching and storming simulator. (David Oliver)

The first training courses at KASOTC are planned to begin in August 2009. ■